

**HERBERT N. MACE**

An Interview Conducted by

Edward N. Howard

August 1, 1980

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## NARRATOR DATA SHEET

August 1, 1980

DATE

Name of narrator: Herbert N. MaceAddress: 515 S. Center St., Terre Haute Phone: 232-3747

R.R. Washington Twp.,

Birthdate: Sept. 18, 1900 Birthplace: Putnam County

4 miles south of Keelsville

Length of residence in Terre Haute: since 1919Education: B.A. in history and math, Indiana State Normal (Indiana State University) 1925Occupational history: Tire and service store, 16 S. 5th St.,Mace petroleum sales, Mace farm and home supply, Mace Service(Lincoln-Mercury dealership)

\* Special interests, activities, etc. Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce, Rose-Hulman Institute, Rotary Club, YMCA, Boys Club, director Merchants Savings Assn. N.B. Mr. Mace is semi-retired and most of above are past activities.

Major subject(s) of interview: AutomobilesNo. of tapes: 1 Length of interview: 1 hour 15 minutes

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Interviewing sessions:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Time</u> | <u>Location</u>              | <u>Interviewer</u> |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 08-01-80    | 2:00 P.M.   | Mace Service<br>629 Ohio, TH | Ed Howard          |

\*For additional information, see Terre Haute and Her People of Progress, 1970, "Herbert Newton Mace," 141, 259. (Vigo County Public Library Special Collections)

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HERBERT N. MACE

Tape 1

August 1, 1980

MACE SERVICE, 6-1/2 and Ohio, Terre Haute, Indiana 47807

INTERVIEWER: Edward N. Howard

TRANSCRIBER: Martha Bettinghaus

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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EH: I'm Ed Howard and this is the first of August, 1980. I'm talking to Herbert N. Mace who I see in the paper referred to as Herb Mace. We're here at Mace Service which is at 6-1/2 and Ohio.

Mr. Mace, you know the project, and we're trying to go back as far as we can in the past to take a look at what was happening in the area of transportation in those days. You came here from Putnam County. What year was that?

MACE: December 29, 1919.

EH: And you went to ISU? You came here to go to school?

MACE: I went to Indiana State Normal.

EH: Let me jump then, if I may, to the automobile business and tire business. I think you were in the tire business. When was that and where was that?

MACE: I began working for Mr. E. P. Whitmer, owner of the Terre Haute Tire Company 16 South 5th Street in March, 1920. And I have sold tires retail ever since. We're still a tire dealer here now. And near that time, as I remember, there was Sam's Tire Shop in Terre Haute "Invite us to your next blowout" was their slogan, Vigo Tire Company owned by Stu Barret, Wagner Tire Company owned by Wagner and later Hall, a Goodyear store owned by Seeburger on South 5th, and . . . Struble Tire & Accessory Co., 507 Ohio Street; Bernard Carney, 516 Cherry Street; Moon Tire Service, 1220 Wabash Avenue; The B. F. Goodrich Rubber Co., Otis Allen, manager, 672 Ohio; U. S. Tire Co., South 8th Street; Twenty Twenty Tire & Vulcanizing Co., 17 South 5th; and many others.

EH: There were several of them then?

MACE: There were. And, of course, they changed hands frequently. There was, after that, Schrepferman Brothers 667 Ohio Street, a Goodyear dealer; and then in the 'twenties, 1925 I believe it was, I

MACE: became a Goodyear dealer and had a service station at 4th and 412-4147 Ohio for 11 years.

EH: Well, would people bring their tires to you? How did they work that?

MACE: At that time, the dealer sold tires, aired them, and repaired them if they had a vulcanizing plant. Some of us made service calls to change tires for people -- put the spare on or fix it or take it back. For the most part, people didn't drive much in the winter; the roads were mostly gravel. Then the National Road wasn't paved yet. You know, between here and Indianapolis it was gravel or crushed rock. The business was altogether different than it is now. They weren't diversified like they are now, and most of the people had a tire shop or a battery shop or a specialty shop.

EH: Did you sell anything besides tires?

MACE: Later I did. We had batteries. Then I wanted to secure independence, so I diversified quite a bit. And then when World War II came, I overdiversified. Because we practiced good service and were popular, I was offered a lot of different franchises. I really attempted too many things. At one time I had an appliance store, a farm store, an appliance service store, a tire store, feed, paint, some furniture, and Crosley autos and an oil business. I didn't become an automobile dealer until 1945, although I had a chance to sell Ford in 1935 when I built this new store here. However, I sold a few of the tiny Crosley cars before 1945. But transportation is a great subject. It involves a lot of everything.

I remember one time at a Chamber of Commerce meeting -- I was a director then -- we had a vote on the St. Lawrence seaway, and I was the only one that voted in favor. All the rest voted against finishing the Great Lakes seaway. Lou Hart, the president, said, "Herb, why did you vote that way?" I said, "I thought it was the evolution of transportation. It would bring the ocean closer to Terre Haute." And due to the automobile . . . it changed everything.

EH: In the 1920's, was there -- you were speaking of water transportation -- was there transportation on the river in the 'twenties?

MACE: No, there wasn't a boat then that carried freight. But when the Great Lakes seaway was completed to Chicago, that brought the ocean that close. Whereas, it was hundreds and hundreds of miles before then from us. You know, the great big ships come to Chicago now.

EH: So they had quit running river barges then -- by the time you started in the automobile business?

MACE: They had. I don't think I ever saw a freight barge on the Wabash River.

EH: How did people get around in the 'twenties? What was their means of transportation?

MACE: Well, mostly Model-T's. That was the big seller then. They cost, at one time, \$265 in 1919. You could buy them by the piece. People liked them and they served them well. Henry Ford tried to help the people. He was a very objective person and I admire him very much. But the competitors offered options, you know, by offering the people different colors and different equipment, and he was slow to adapt to that kind of manufacturing.

EH: Were they still running interurbans then?

MACE: They were. I don't remember when they stopped. When we built this building in 1935-6, we had them haul part of the material that we used here in this building, and I know that they were still running then. I forgot what year they did quit.

EH: Where did they haul it from, Indianapolis?

MACE: Somewhere, yes, along the line. Maybe it was further than that. You know these transportation companies have deals that they finish up each other's job.

EH: Do you . . . . I don't know exactly how to ask this, but as you look back over your sixty years, do you recall what people thought of cars? What did they think of the Model-T, compared to the V-8 and compared to what they think today? Has there been a change in how people look at cars?

MACE: Well, I think that depends entirely on their economic circumstances and the custom of the day.

MACE: When you are in Rome, you do as Rome does; and if you have plenty of means, you buy what you want. But most people have to . . . are limited by the budget, and they buy what best they can with what they've got to buy with. I think the automobile has been everybody's magic carpet. Next to a home, it is the most anticipated purchase they can buy and has been for many, many years. To illustrate the point, I walked so long that when I got my first bicycle, I thought I was flying! I'd walk up the hills to get to ride down, because it's so much more of a thrill than walking. It's just like bring the great St. Lawrence seaway closer to where you live. The evolution of transportation . . . now we've got airplanes and many other better means that we didn't have then. Of course, the automobile needs and caused the good roads. I've always been grateful to AAA American Automobile Association because they marked the roads early and I joined when I was a kid going to college. I've been sixty years a member of AAA. They at first didn't charge very much. I forget. It was a dollar or two, but they give good service and what you pay now is a bargain.

EH: When you came to Terre Haute, were there bus lines then?

MACE: Yes, I think so. Yes, I'm sure there were because I remember going from Poland to Brazil in a little old one-cylinder International truck. It was used for a bus to haul passengers. They used to have no regulations. We used to have jitney buses here in town. They did a good job and helped a lot of people very economically and made work for people. It's a wonder to me that they don't use them again. I read where they were in some places.

EH: What do you mean by jitney bus?

MACE: Well, at that time, they just charged a nickel for a ride from downtown to Twelve Points or West Terre Haute; and that's what we used to call a jitney.

EH: Was it a Model-T?

MACE: No, they had different makes. You could have any kind you wish.

EH: That was in the 'twenties that you were talking about?

MACE: Yes, and I think they had a city ordinance that put them out of business. It might have been gotten by the cab or bus companies; I don't know what caused them to outlaw them. It might have been insurance problems.

EH: Were they open vehicles?

MACE: Well, they had mostly all ragtops back in the early 'twenties, you know. They called them touring cars, but then the coupes come and then the sedans. The first enclosed car was called coupe. The first car I owned was a ragtop -- a 1923 Gray touring car. It had a Continental Red Seal motor, and it gave 27 miles to the gallon. But it didn't have much power; I had trouble going up the Reelsville hill with it -- you know, to have enough power. It was made by the company that made the Gray motorboat. I owned it two years and traded it in on a Buick, secondhand. It belonged to . . . used to be Len Marshall's car when it was new. Then I bought, in 1928, a new Hudson. Then in 1931 I bought a new Nash. Harry Cole was the oldest automobile dealer in Terre Haute at that time, I was told. In the early 'twenties, most automobile dealers were on North 7th Street. However, Cole was located down on Ohio Street right east of 5th Street where the Woodburn Printing Company's big place is there now. He had the Cadillac and Nash, I believe, agency. He was considered the oldest car dealer in Terre Haute for years. Cliff Shanks worked for him, and he later quit and started the Studebaker agency here in the 'twenties.

EH: They sold . . .

MACE: On 7th Street, there was Buick, Pontiac, and quite a few different makes in the car agencies. Of course, in those days there were many manufacturers still left -- Hupmobile, Franklin. Chrysler didn't begin making cars until about '25, 1925.

EH: Now, the dealers then, did they all work on cars? Did they have a service department?

MACE: Yes, they all had a service department, but mechanics weren't very well equipped, and they weren't factory trained. They didn't have so much testing equipment. It was more of a hunt-and-peck -- like working a typewriter with one finger. I don't know

MACE: if the manufacturers furnished them specs for the cars then or not. Of course, they were a lot more simple. They didn't have all these extra goodies that they've got now, and they weren't as hard to work on. The Ford Model-T, you could buy them a part at a time and assemble you a car.

EH: I read somewhere that in 1927 the first public restroom in a service station was built at 8th and Ohio Streets. Did you know that? Do you . . . .

MACE: You mean the first one in the United States?

EH: Apparently so.

MACE: I don't know; I never read that, but it might be true.

EH: Service station at 8th and Ohio, 1927. Whose service station would that be? Do you recall? 8th and Ohio?

MACE: No, I don't think there was a service station there then. That was Gerstmeyer, a doctor. I tore the old building down . . . . On the northwest corner of 8th and Ohio? What year did you say?

EH: 1927.

MACE: That couldn't be. No, it wasn't true. There was a service station at 9th and Ohio. That was the one I own now. It was I think a White Rose. It belonged to the Trimbles in Indianapolis. They had a whole string of stations; and they sold out to Shell for, I think it was nine million dollars in 1929 -- the father and two brothers. One of their old stations is still standing in West Terre Haute. It used to be on old U.S. highway 40 where that package liquor store is in West Terre Haute -- on old 40 there, on that north-south street on old 40 on the southwest corner. They had a different style of service station. They had a canopy and you'd drive around behind the main building for the gas pumps. Everybody else had the gas pumps in front. But they were real successful and they were a very big jobber with headquarters in Indianapolis.

EH: About what year was that, sir?

MACE: Well, when they sold out to Shell Oil Company, it was 1929; and in '27 they owned the corner of 9th and

MACE: Ohio which I own now, which is presently a Mobil station. That was a White Rose then. I think,

EH: Well, the cars then would drive in either to the front or the back like over at West Terre Haute you were talking about . . . .

MACE: I could be mistaken on the trade name of White Rose. It might have been . . . and I am. But it was the Trimble Oil Company that owned that station and built the one in West Terre Haute, and they did sell out to Shell Oil in 1929. I'm sure of that. On second thought, the White Rose and National Refining . . . I bought them out in 1945 or -6. They had a little business left in Terre Haute, but they had a good bulk plant which I needed at 13th Street and 6th Avenue, which is our main bulk plant now. That was a White Rose and National Refining. That Trimble Oil Company had a trademark and I'm having trouble remembering what it was.

EH: When the person would drive in to the service stations then in the late 'twenties in their car, could they get the oil checked and the tires checked and the windshield cleaned and things like that?

MACE: Yes, I don't remember if they service stations checked the tires, but they would check the oil. I'm sure of that. Tire shops always checked air pressure, Service improved and increased as a merchandising tool later more due to the competition between the tire companies and the petroleum companies. When I started 24-hour service here, 53 years ago, there was no one else that stayed open all night except us; but it wasn't long until the oil companies would have their better dealers and stations that they controlled stay open all night and have a wrecker. They compelled all the area dealers to be more competitive and have the best values. They pushed them to the point where a lot of them didn't make any money. Likewise, right now in 1980, with this cut price on gas, they didn't lower the wholesale price for them. Many dealers are being pressured to sell cheaper to use up their allocation because there is presently a surplus of finished product. You know the media loves to allege and insinuate and all that. They claim that there's price wars. They aren't price wars. They're just price reductions to try to satisfy the supplier. If crude oil would come down and stay down, it would make the price cheaper sooner or later. It is presently lower on the spot market. The spot market is not what they contract for by the year to run their refineries. It's

MACE: /the spot market is/ what it /oil or gas/ happens to be for a shipload now or a truckload, either way. Local distributors of petroleum like we are buy some that way if we are short, and we sell some that way if we find that we're long and find that somebody needs it.

EH: When was it that a large number of cars were in Terre Haute? In other words, in the days of the Model-T, I understand that there weren't so many of them. When did you start seeing a lot of them on the street?

MACE: In 1929 -- '28 and '29 -- there were very few good roads. They /people/ were out taking trips /on the paved roads/ where they were just bumper to bumper, you know, all wanting to use the same road at the same time. Like Brown County in the fall /when the leaves are pretty/.

EH: And so you would drive over there in the late 'twenties?

MACE: Well, I wasn't going to Brown County then, but I have been in those traffic strings back in 1929. Of course, in '30 and '31, '32, and '33, people were financially distressed and out of work, and they didn't drive so much. They didn't sell very many new ones during those years.

EH: And then business picked up again, I guess around '37, in there somewhere.

MACE: Yes, it improved substantially, but there was another depression in '38. Roosevelt made his quarantine Hitler speech in Milwaukee and then created his defense program. And then that primed the pump. At that time there was about as many unemployed as there was in 1932 -- about ten million in both cases. But there was a bigger work force in 1938 which meant a smaller percentage of the total was unemployed.

EH: Then during World War II . . . .

MACE: Business has always been cyclical. You have those ups and downs. Of course, some of them are much worse than others. We had a big depression right after World War I, before the Great Depression in the early 'thirties. In '38 and in '74 and now '80 . . . same way in the automobile business. It's like that

MACE: too. It goes up and down. It's an anticipated purchase; they can defer buying and not buy many while they are unable or unwilling.

EH: During the Great Depression in the 'thirties, were there many automobile dealers and service stations that went out of business?

MACE: Yes, there were. It's been a business that has been very hazardous. That's the reason I didn't take the Ford agency in '35 when it was first offered me. I didn't want to have all of my eggs all in one basket, and I didn't want the pressure of the factory although there was a big opportunity there. Like General MacArthur said, "Everything is a risk, but life is full of opportunities."

EH: What about the automobile dealers during World War II? What happened?

MACE: Well, there were no manufacturers. They quit manufacturing and used everything for the war effort. They people had to use the old cars; and they did a good job because they were able to get parts. Most used cars were better at the end of the war than they were at the beginning on account of they had a lot of replacement of worn parts. People cherished them as all they had so they took better care of them. I had several people thank me for selling them better tires before the war started because they had a lot of trouble with cheap ones and recaps during the war.

EH: We've covered 20-25 years in there. Some people say that the morality has declined due to the automobile. How do you answer that?

MACE: I don't believe that at all. I think we've just been too permissive. Recently the younger people have been fortunate that they haven't had any hardships much, and it takes hardships to make hardy people according to Longfellow. I believe that's true. We parents and we teachers and others nowadays buy our child a car, and we don't know where he is or what he is doing. We ought to spend more effort and put legs under the youth to stand on so that they will be successful after we're gone. I think that even though minimum wage is a good thing (and I was for it when I first read about it in high school economics), yet, these kids ought to be allowed to work at any rate the

MACE: parents bargain for them in order to give them experience because you learn by doing and if you haven't done anything, you don't know much.

EH: Do you employ young people now?

MACE: Yes, some, but not as much as I used to because of the attitude most of them have. They're not trained to be respectful of discipline and usually do not intend to stay long enough to warrant training them. Our kind of work is more complicated than it used to be. It takes longer to train, and there is a lot more damage if they make a booboo. But I have hired hundreds of them. I hired many, many blacks years before most others did. I hired ten students at once for Johnny Wooden when he was basketball coach at Indiana State Teachers College, now Indiana State University and ten students at once for his predecessor, Mr. Curtis. We have now two young men that go to State Normal Indiana State University working here. That's Mickey Hunt and Bill Jenkins.

EH: You spoke of Mr. Curtis. Who is he?

MACE: He was a coach at State Normal preceding Johnny Wooden. He was Glen Curtis; he was a famous Martinsville high school coach. He had two or three state Indiana champion teams before he quit high school and went to coaching college. When he left State, he tried coaching pro basketball, I believe.

He had, I think, coached Johnny Wooden in high school because Johnny went to Martinsville. I think Johnny went to high school under him. There was another famous player named Herb Curtis, but it was not him.

EH: The young people, then, did they own cars themselves?

MACE: Most of them did not. It wasn't common unless it was a child of an affluent person. The wages were real low then and it took a lot of hours of work to pay for a car. See now, you can buy a cheap car with a few months work. Of course, new cars were low compared to now. When we began selling Mercurys in 1945, a new Mercury was \$1,095, and now it is \$10,000 for the better and bigger ones or thereabouts.

EH: What was the first long trip you took and what kind of car were you in?

MACE: Well, it depends on what you mean by long. How far? I drove in my little Gray to Akron, Ohio. That is the farthest I went in it. Soon after I was married in 1924. Soon after, we took regular vacations and I have ever since. I think everybody needs them. I think I drove up to Wisconsin in '26 which was the first trip I took that far, I think. Every year I took one or two.

EH: What kind of car were you in when you went to Wisconsin?

MACE: It was a Buick, a 1924 sedan.

EH: Were there electric cars in the 'twenties?

MACE: Yes, there were quite a few in Terre Haute. I remember Mrs. Fairbanks had one. Most of the wealthy ladies in town had one . . . not most, but several. Mr. Lederer had one. I remember his driver run right out in front of me one day. I nearly ran into it. It was his daughter driving. She was a lifelong friend of my wife and me but she had run it out in front of me. This happened to me down here on South 6th Street. I was going along unconcerned and all at once saw this car turn the corner right in front of me and I pretty near hit her. I had another case like that over on 5th Street. I had bought my little Gray car then. It was a fellow who worked over at the Levi store. He drove up in front of me. I couldn't stop, so we had a slight collision.

EH: The electric cars, they didn't take them out of Terre Haute, did they?

MACE: No, they never did outlaw them. People just quit using them.

EH: Yes, but I mean that they wouldn't drive to Sullivan in those cars?

MACE: Oh, you mean they weren't made for long trips; no, sir, they weren't. The batteries wouldn't have enough electricity to take any long trips.

Speaking of people driving right out in front of you, I was amazed when I went for the first time to Texas. They did that there; then, they'd come right

MACE: out of their lane and drive right out and turn right in front of you. You had to slow down or get hit. I saw that happen many times.

Back in the 'twenties and 'thirties, very few states had stock laws; and if you weren't careful, you'd hit a pig, a cow, or a horse and then you'd have to pay for it besides the damage to your car. They still have that in Illinois as I understand; if you hit an animal on the road over there, you have to settle for it. In Indiana, if you hit an animal in the road, then the owner has to pay as it's his fault for the damage.

EH: After they paved the National Road, a lot more traffic went through Terre Haute then. People started moving out of town, I guess, also, didn't they, and began building in the suburbs or going to the farms?

MACE: Well, I think they used to do that in the old days more than they did in the early 'twenties or 'thirties. That happened more than urban flight. It has happened a lot more in later times due to racism, I suppose. People want to get away from a situation they were compelled to live with. Of course, I always liked the outdoors, cleaner air, not so crowded, and you can relax better, I think. I like country life. I like country people. I have a lot of like for them because I'm one myself.

EH: Do you remember when the city of Terre Haute first started operating the buses?

MACE: Yes, it was back in the 'thirties, but I can't remember what year.

EH: They have operated them ever since?

MACE: Yes, the Traction Company operated them first. They owned them, I think. You know, they were the same ones who operated the interurbans at that time. That's the way I remember it.

EH: Were there periods of time, maybe then in the 'thirties or 'forties, when a lot of people rode the buses?

MACE: There were, yes. Of course, there wasn't such a large proportion of the total population that owned cars then. It doesn't seem to me like they used to be in such a big hurry to get there. Maybe it is on account of modern times or maybe it was on account of improved transportation. I don't know.

EH: Will Terre Haute ever have the kind of downtown that it used to have?

MACE: Well, I hope so. But, I don't know. All over the country they have this sort of problem. Uptown, I think, we have about a triple whammy here because we had urban renewal, and Indiana State took so much property off the tax roll, and then the city apparently decided to leave it /the current tax rate/ and get most of the money that they could from uptown rather than reducing the rates so that people could build /new/ or rent their empty places. A lot of them tore them down to avoid taxes. I sold quite a bit of downtown property myself because I didn't need it and didn't like the unfair tax rate.

Of course, we /at Mace Service/ haven't been damaged so much by the trend here because we sell an anticipated purchase. If we sold convenient purchases, we'd be compelled to move or have a better budget in order to survive.

I would like to see everybody grow and prosper, and that's better for me and everybody else if they do. I would like to expand the demand for what everybody has to offer. But we need more teamwork in order to accomplish that.

I heard or read recently where our mayor was in favor of a better tax rate downtown and I think that would /slowly/ do the job. It is now unfair because property should be taxed on what it would bring in the market place. People aren't in the habit of erecting or renting a building on a place where it cost more than another place that's available. We have more to offer than any other shopping center around. Our uptown problem is part of Terre Haute's problems overall. We need to grow and have needed to for many years. I like Terre Haute. It's been good to me and it's full of fine people, but we seem to not learn the lesson that Larry Bird taught us, that teamwork pays off. I'd like to see the time come when Terre Haute grows and in proportion to other towns the same size as in 1900.

EH: You mentioned the Drummond study, "Terre Haute, City of Non-Growth." Do you think that the way the roads were developed or anything connected with transportation caused that?

MACE: You mean, what caused our slow growth?

EH: Yes.

MACE: Well, I think it's a combination of things. I think the coal industry used to be all deep mines, and we had a lot of miners live here. They went to non-union fields that were getting a lot of business by stripping, and we lost a lot of residents that way.

Then the prohibition came and they the city lost a lot of the liquor manufacturing. Although we have a lot of advantages, we haven't recovered -- and I don't think there has been consistent, persistent concerted effort to make it grow.

I think success is the fruit of enlightened persistence, and I think you've got to stick with something until you win or lose if you want to do it. Of course, for years I heard the argument about the home of Debs, the AFL American Federation of Labor, a bad union town, and big companies wouldn't come here. I don't believe that. I think we could have worked around that if we had tried harder. Well, we've had a lot of industry come, but we've lost a lot. One great loss has been many educated young people for better jobs.

The trend wasn't urban and a combination of things, but I think Terre Haute uptown can build back up to what it used to be and can do what other cities have in similar circumstances. It will take a lot of investment and effort. It could be done.

Maybe if they lower the taxes enough, that might be all that they needed, I don't know. I think urban renewal came along just at the right time to give the shopping centers the biggest boost they ever had and it forced a lot of people to go to them, because they couldn't afford to build a new place. They took the place away from them at market value, and they had nowhere else to go unless they built a new one. But not everyone can build a new place, especially if they're renters.

EH: Shopping centers offer parking. When did it become congested in the downtown Terre Haute and hard to find a place to park?

MACE: Well, before the shopping centers come, it was. I think it was due to the scramble that there was then to get parking paid for by the whole city. A lot of people didn't want that to happen. I personally think the merchants needed more parking, but they weren't willing to pay for it. They wanted the whole city to pay for it and I advocated us uptown people pay for whatever parking we needed ourselves.

Of course, all over the country there's always deals where the whole tax base did pay for what I call socialized parking. But I always had plenty of parking room because I had a lot of ground and it wasn't needed by Mace Service. I had no other purpose for it other than that, but I never agreed to keep it strictly for parking because I would have been glad to have more income on it if I could've gotten it. But I believe that whatever parking problem there was then could have been handled by the uptown people that needed it if they had been willing to pay for it.

They did buy and rent some lots and they soon unloaded them. But I suppose they lost money on them. But there is a great surplus of parking uptown now, and there is no immediate need for it. If it would grow and be like it used to be, there would be need.

I went to meetings on that subject, and the way they'd recommend is have key lots and then have out-lying lots for the employees and make them use them. Our lots uptown and our meters are used largely by employees, because it is convenient for them to park near where they work. That should never have been allowed in the first place.

I've had a lot of criticisms about my stand on that, but I believe that it is not right to tax everybody in town to have me and a bunch of uptown merchants have subsidized parking by the taxpayer. I think the shopping centers pay for their own parking for their customers in the rent they charge. Everybody knows that is a fact.

EH: I think we're just about to the end of the 45-minute side of the tape. How does this sound to you . . . I imagine you're getting tired . . .

MACE: No, I'm not tired.

EH: You're not? Well, I have some more things I'd like to talk to you about. Would you want to continue or would you like to wait about a week, and we'll give it another shot?

MACE: Well, is it all right for you to wait? Whatever is convenient for you.

EH: Why don't I turn this tape over then, and we'll relax a second.

MACE: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE-SIDE TWO

EH: Mr. Mace, there have been many different types of cars, and you have owned a number you were telling me about. Tell me some of the early cars that you thoroughly enjoyed.

MACE: Well, I'll answer you like this. I was like the old maid -- just come on anybody. You know, when they asked her if she wanted a rich man or a good-looking man or a smart man, she said, "Appearance! The sooner the better!" Laughter

I was a poor boy and I used to go to a Poland picnic and admire those big, nice, pretty cars. I dreamed about the day, maybe, that I could have one. But in those days in the teens, in my early life, the car wasn't owned by very many. They didn't get to be owned by everybody until more recent times.

My first car, I was fortunate, I bought it for \$350 in 1923 from a lady who got it for a quarter. The eastside businessmen gave it away as a promotion on a lottery deal, and I was glad to get that car for that low price. However, I think that Ford sold for

MACE: less than \$300 in 1919, but my first car was several years later.

The thing that is interesting about early cars is that there were so many kinds, and some of them were really expensive, you know. Some of them were \$4,000-\$5,000. I wish I had a list of all the different makes that were made. There were several hundred. I've got some models of old ones in there in the office you can look at.

EH: You said after the Buick, you bought what kind of car?

MACE: A new Hudson. I always bought cars through gratitude from someone who was helping me to succeed in business. I wanted to pay them back, and I wanted to keep them coming. I buy about everything that way yet. I like to buy quality, but I think it's a pleasure to reciprocate business.

EH: You've had a long-time love affair with cars, haven't you?

MACE: Well, no . . . I like the service business and I like to merchandise tires, but I didn't become a car agent until 1945 at the end of World War II. I was diversified in business before that. I had the farm store, appliance store, and the petroleum business and a T.B.A. set up here. That is Mace Service. I'm not a pioneer automobile dealer in Terre Haute at all.

EH: But everything you say about cars, you say it with a feeling and a fondness and you accept it as a total way of life.

MACE: Well, I think automobiles have done a lot for the country and I have made my livelihood in associated lines. There are between a fourth and a sixth of the people of the country whose livelihood depends on automobiles or associated industries. Part of the reason we have this depression is that reduced sales of cars makes people lay off. They use half the steel and half the rubber that is used in this country and a great many other things.

EH: Were you ever involved in racing?

MACE: No, sir. I went to two 500's and saw a man killed, and that was enough. I didn't go to any more. I think it's done a lot of good because they have tested out new ideas and new things in order to make the cars better. A lot of the things we need on the cars we use now were first used in the 500.

EH: In the, I guess, the 'thirties, was it . . . they had a number of race tracks in this area, didn't they? Jungle Park . . .

MACE: They did, yes.

EH: Did you ever go to them?

MACE: I went to one and they threw dirt all over me so I didn't go to any more. I went to one at Jungle Park -- that's up on Raccoon Creek. Mr. Cole was up there one time -- Harry Cole, the pioneer auto dealer in Terre Haute. A wheel came off of somebody's car and hit him, and it could have killed him, but he wasn't seriously injured.

EH: You have seen changes over the years in two areas that I'd like to ask you about. One is quality and the other is safety. Let me take the quality first. What has happened, let us say, since 1946 in your experience in the cars coming out of Detroit? How do they compare over the years?

MACE: Well, a few things in the old days were better on account of cost. Henry Ford used to use bonderized steel which wouldn't rust, and now we have to under-seal them in order to prevent the rust from working from the inside out.

But now most things are much better. You can drive the car longer with less expense if you look at the much longer lasting cars bought by the modern dollars which are many times smaller in purchasing power. Of course, so far as the money now compared to back then, I think the quality is much better than it used to be. To me, quality means comfort, convenience, and adaptability, maneuverability, and a lot of things. It's just like this: the tires are much improved, the brakes stop the wheels, and the tires stop your car. The other parts . . . it is due to the advancement in technology; the quality is much better.

MACE: Technology is moving ahead all of the time /and/ it has been. It's hard to imagine what they are going to discover. I think you and I'd be lucky if we were born just as far as possible in the future, because you can't imagine what hasn't been learned yet and every generation has got all their parents gave them for nothing when they start out.

Speaking of safety, it has moved forward just as fast as the quality due to the same reasons, I think.

EH: Thinking of your Hudson, for example, or thinking of the 1947 Mercury, thinking of the Lincoln that you drive today, the car you have today then is much safer?

MACE: Yes, take, for example, the springs on the 1928 or '29 Hudson. If I would go down the road and wouldn't see a chuckhole, it would bang down on the axle. I would put an extra leaf in and it would still do it. They didn't know how to design a modern automobile then; they did the best they could. They evolved into what they are now like everything else. I used to go up north fishing in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Most of the roads were not paved there then, and I got used to jumping the bumps. I'd go down the road too fast. I'd see a chuckhole and I'd put the brakes on. It would make the front end rear up and the back end would go down, and then it would go the other way, and I'd get over that bump pretty well without hitting the axle on my weak spring. You don't have to jump the bumps any more with a car. It can take them. Go over a railroad crossing too fast and you don't notice it.

EH: There was an attempt to have a mandatory seat-belt lock that unless you have your seatbelt fastened, you couldn't turn on the ignition. What did you think of that?

MACE: Well, I think it was a good thing if a person would train himself to remember to do it. Because if you drive at the legal speed limits, you're not going to get hurt if you have a collision as likely as if you don't have your belt buckled. If you don't have your doors locked and you get hit sideways, your car often spins and your doors come out and you fall out and get run over. I think seatbelts are a good thing. I used to lock them every time, but I've gotten out of the habit now because I don't drive very much. But a person should use them.

MACE: I don't know about the airbag. I don't know, but I doubt if it is worth it. It makes the car cost several hundred dollars more, and I doubt if the consumer would be benefitted by that extra expense to have that added. They aren't tested very much for very long, and I don't think anybody knows much about them.

EH: In 1946-47, did they have the same kind of insurance coverages available for a car that they have now?

MACE: Yes, I think you could buy full coverage, PL and PD, and liability but it didn't cost near so much. One reason it didn't, we didn't have so much of these trial lawyers active then and now they -- the insurance companies -- have a hard time making money on that kind of insurance on account of the inflation and the rapid increase of cost of repairs and parts and lawsuits.

EH: I think we're about to wrap up unless there are some things that come to your mind. What was your favorite car? I think of some of the beautiful Lincolns, for example. What was your favorite car? Year? Model?

MACE: That I don't remember. I liked them all. I would have been glad to have any car when I was a boy and when I was young. I remember making a hard decision. Harry Lang tried to sell me a Lincoln before he went out of business. I wanted the car but I refrained. (The tape contains another sentence which Mr. Mace later realized was erroneous, so it is omitted from the transcript.)

EH: What year Lincoln would that have been?

MACE: Oh, I don't know, early 'thirties. I forgot what year. At that time, the Lincoln was between \$4,000 and \$5,000. I remember several people around town had one. One was a man named McGinty on the west side. I was airing his tires one day. He was proud of this old car (it wasn't an old car), and he said, "She weighs 4,000 pounds and she cost me a dollar a pound!" (Laughs) I remember that. Mr. Hampton had one. Guy Jackson had one. McGinty had one. Quite a few people that traded with me had a Lincoln. That was after Ford bought them out.

EH: There have apparently been some gangsters . . .

MACE: I might have made a mistake then. It probably wasn't before Ford bought Lincoln, but I said that. Go ahead.

EH: Apparently, according to what we read and hear, there have been some gangsters or people like that in Terre Haute from time to time; and when you see movies, you see that they have a big car. Were you aware of any of the gangsters and did they have big cars?

MACE: Yes, the Traum gang had big cars and the high-jackers that followed them had big cars. I remember one good customer I had named Highfield, and he was killed not long after that. He was what you call a highjacker. In prohibition, you know, there was a lot of dealing and stealing in bootlegging. It was hauled in from out of the United States. I didn't know much about it, but they would come here for a good place for service.

This Highfield that I mentioned had a Stutz. It was one of the most valuable cars, one of the greatest valued ones now for collectors' items.

EH: It was very fast . . .

MACE: A lot of the cars were made in Indianapolis. The Cole was, the Stutz, the Mormon, and many different makes. They were nearly all fast.

EH: Did they have a lot of trouble with blowouts then . . .

MACE: Sam's tire shop had a slogan for them! Yes, tires were a big problem. They were small diameter high pressure tires, and they didn't leave much distance between the ground and the rim. When they would run over a bump or a hard object, that would jam the rim down against the road and pinch the tire and they'd call that a stone bruise. In the old days the cars all used fabric tires, and the fabric didn't have much resilience -- much give. And then add high pressure and the air didn't have much give. You see a tire is a rolling cushion. The tire does the job. It provides traction and cushion and mileage. Nowadays, there is a lot of rim clearance and a bigger tire size which gives more carrying capacity. You could carry the whole world on a single tire on two pounds of air if

MACE: you had a big enough tire. The bigger the tire the more carrying capacity.

There were all kinds of trouble on the road. I remember when I was a farmhand in 1914, a man took me with him from Clay county, west of Poland two miles or three miles, to Terre Haute and to Mecca and back. We didn't get home 'til late at night, because we changed between six and fifteen tires -- fixed punctures and leaks in the tubes. We used to pump them all up by hand and I helped pump up several that day. I used to carry a hand pump in the car on trips in case I needed it.

EH: You mentioned Mr. Highfield?

MACE: He was a character in those days. He was killed in one of those . . . . He was murdered. He lived on one of the avenues -- on Third or Fourth Avenue off of 13th Street. But he used to buy tires and get service from me. I knew what kind of car he drove. I was told that that was what his occupation was. He never told me that. There was one bootlegger here in town that lived to be a ripe old age, and he was never arrested that I knew of.

EH: You mentioned that Traum gang.

MACE: T-r-a-u-m. Traum. Joe Traum. He was head of a gang here in the 'thirties. He later built the Manor House, a restaurant. His son operated it later. After he left Terre Haute, he went down to the Miami area. He had a nice restaurant on the beach there. In the early 'fifties when I took Joe Higgins with me on a golfing trip to Florida, we went and had a meal there. That was the last time I saw Joe, Senior. He had a famous pianist, Jose Melis. He was later Johnny Carson's pianist Jack Paar's musical director, a musician on the Tonight Show. Maybe I misquoted Jose Melis. I think that's right. Carson dropped Melis from the show when he took over Tonight. I get my names mixed up, like Mel Tillis, you know . . . .

EH: Um hm. Did Mr. Highfield . . . . Where was he murdered? In town here?

MACE: I forget. That was in the days of Al Capone of Chicago and others. There were a lot of underworld murders then and are yet -- an illegal business.

EH: Are there other people that are of interest or personalities and the like that you have served over the years, either before this building or after . . . well-known people or interesting people who have been your customers?

MACE: Well, I've always liked to be a franchisee of popular brands, and actually I met a great many of them. These older people that were leading businessmen here in the 'twenties and 'thirties were nearly all nice to me.

I remember with pleasure how Tony Hulman's dad used to treat me. He'd come down to get his tires aired, and I always carry gauges as I do now (tire gauges) and I'd air his tires. If he needed one, I'd say so and he'd say, "Put it on." He had a basement full of tires, but he was kind enough to buy one from me, and I liked him for that.

Mr. Ely was a nice old man. He was the guy that used to be the owner of the Highland Iron and Steel, and he helped to start the Wabash Fibre Box factory. He gave \$500 a year to our Y.M.C.A. And Mr. Topping used to be president of the stamping mill. He gave me some lasting advice. He said, "Young man, you will have good times and bad times. You must make enough in good times to carry you across the bad times."

Not all of them, but many of those people used to be my friends. Mr. Cox used to be the head of this bank over here. Mr. Myers, Mr. Filbeck and many others gave me good advice and wished me well. See, I'm old enough that people born since the Civil War were still living then.

EH: Did you know Max Ehrmann?

MACE: Yes, I knew him pretty well. He always walked and he was active around town. In 1938 I wrote a little poem, a prayer in verse, and I had him look at it, and he thought it was all right.

EH: Do you remember it?

MACE: Yes, I can quote it for you.

EH: Would you please?

MACE: "Each day, dear Friend, let's pray to  
Thee above,  
That wars may end and time will  
merge with love.  
Then when I am dead and from this  
world have gone,  
I would it said he was a friend  
of everyone."

EH: And Max Ehrmann said that he liked that?

MACE: He said that it was iambic or some kind of style.  
I didn't know enough about poetry to classify it. I  
think it is hillbilly, personally. I am a non-  
conformist.

EH: Did you talk to him much? Was he interesting?

MACE: Well, I never had spare time. I was so busy then.  
I didn't visit much with people unless they were here  
on business. But he walked past often.

His brother, Albert, was my friend. I met him  
at meals at the old Y.W.C.A. restaurant, and he had  
an apartment over here on Walnut Street where they  
rented apartments. He lived in one of them and he  
invited me there as his guest. I went there one time  
and he entertained me with a meal. He told me about  
the years he spent in Paris. He was the acting head  
of the Ehrmann Manufacturing Company, which the  
brothers owned -- Emil, Albert, and Max (Max wasn't  
very active). They were prominent people here then  
and before then. Mr. Albert built a building that  
they tore down in 1979 at 6th and Main Streets.  
He built it and rented it to Montgomery Ward in the  
'thirties when he tore down the old Kleeman Building  
that used to be a Kleeman department store there.  
Recently, they tore that down. At last count it the  
tenant was Poise-N-Ivy women's fashions.

EH: I know what you mean, of course. It seems strange  
to hear some say at 6th and Main . . . .

MACE: It was on this corner . . . .

EH: Um hm.

MACE: Southeast corner.

EH: Did you know Eugene Debs?

MACE: I saw him sitting on the porch, but I never spoke to him. But his brother, Theodore, was a pretty good acquaintance of mine. He drove for his brother, Eugene. He bought his tires from me, and I aired them for him. He was a nice, well-mannered, pleasant man. After Gene got out of the prison, he'd sit on the porch there and people would visit. I roomed up the street, 808 North 8th, and I saw him several times there at his home 451 North 8th Street.

EH: You'd say hello to him?

MACE: No, sir! I never did speak to him. I heard a lot about him, but, you know, I read that book about deputy Debs or something. I forgot most of that novel they wrote about him but I read that. He worked hard for his ideals.

EH: What about the Dreiser family? Did you know any of them?

MACE: No, sir. My son-in-law wrote his master's thesis on Theodore Dreiser. He could tell you a great deal about him. His name is Richard Dowell. He teaches English up at Indiana State.

EH: I know him well. Is there anything else that comes to your mind that you'd like to . . .

MACE: No, I can't recall unless associated with things. It's hard to recall unless you have a reminder, you know. I remember pretty well in associated circumstances. I read an article which stated, "You remember according to frequency and recency and intensity . . ." But I think association helps more than that! (Laughs) I'm sorry that I didn't have more information to give you.

EH: Oh, you have had plenty! I'll turn this off now then.

END OF TAPE

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